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association have brought them in close contact with each other and their cultures are in certain fields inter-related, the two communities retain their own socio-religious identities. The Muslims are in a minority in the population of the village; but they are a close-knit group in socio-religious matters. All Muslims belong to the Sunni division. Among them there are no great inequalities of wealth and possession, and consequently there is, within the Muslim community, no evidence of class distinction. In matters affecting their socio-religious life they act as a separate and self-sufficient group, rarely seeking the help, assistance or advice of their Hindu neighbours. One of the remarkable characteristics of the predominantly Hindu rural society of India is that non-Hindu communities have also been influenced by the caste-hierarchy of Hinduism. Even the non-Hindu groups have had to fit somehow into the rigid framework of the caste-dominated social system; and while they have always remained outside it, never having been regarded as Hindus, they have nevertheless acquired a quasi-caste status in accordance with their general social, economic and political position. As Hyderabad was formerly ruled by a Muslim, his co-religionists had a privileged position in the affairs of the State. Their social status in the rural areas has always been more or less equal to that of the agricultural castes; although from the point of view of religion the Hindus have always regarded them as inferior. Nevertheless, a clean-caste Hindu can sit down with a Muslim, and the less orthodox can even touch them without having to take a subsequent purificatory bath.

The Hindu social system, founded on the division of society into 'castes', presents a social framework of great complexity. The traditional *varna* system, modified in the course of the evolution of Indian social polity, divides Hindu society into five major groups. The first three of these, viz. Brahmins (priests and men of learning), Kshatriyas (rulers and warriors) and Vaishyas (traders) are regarded as *dvija* or 'twice born'. According to Hindu ritual only they are allowed to undergo the *upanayana* ceremony which symbolizes their spiritual re-birth and entitles them to wear the sacred thread. The fourth group is composed of numerous occupational castes who are relatively clean and are not classed as untouchables. Finally, in the fifth major group we can place all the untouchable castes. This classification is accepted by the Hindus all over India. The relative positions of the different groups,

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bad way, the elders of the allied families are expected to intervene. Scandals or dishonourable behaviour in one unit are likely to spoil the name of all the allied families, and as such tradition enjoins elders to advise, warn and even admonish the erring members. A young man given to excessive drinking, gambling or any similar vice would often be admonished by the elders of this extended family. If he cannot keep his wife under control, or if the quarrels of the two become very frequent and too public, the neighbours would convey the information to the elders of the extended family and expect them to use their initiative in putting things right. In all such cases they will be within their customary rights if they intervene. They can demand that their advice is heard and followed.

Within the family unit the eldest male is generally regarded as the head. His wife or the next senior male is given the second place. A respectful son very often describes his old widowed mother as the 'head' of the family. However, in many cases the *de facto* head of the family may be a son under whose guidance and supervision the land is cultivated or the craft or profession of the family is practised. Parents dominate the scene in their youth and early middle age. With approaching old age they gradually recede to the background. Nominally they remain the heads of the family, but their sons are left more or less free to conduct the management of the family property and profession as they like. As long as the father remains the real head of the family, the internal management of the family remains the charge of the mother. Sons are expected to obey her and the daughters-in-law are expected to carry out her instructions. Any failure or reluctance on the part of a daughter-in-law to carry out the wishes of her mother-in-law leads to constant quarrels and complications, and in many cases to ultimate separation. Between sons and daughters, as a rule, preference is shown to the former, but if the sisters have considerable seniority in age, their younger brothers are expected to respect and obey them.

In the village community of Shamirpet, which has considerable variations of caste and class, and significant differences in education and urban contacts, it is only natural to expect great variations in the family ideals and ethics of the different groups. In the themes of their idealizations, the different sections of the population show striking similarities; but in their attitudes and reactions

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to specific social situations the different levels present remarkable contrasts.

For the purposes of such comparison, the population of the village may be broadly classified into three levels:

(1) *Upper Level*: comprising the 'twice born' castes of Brahmins and Komtis; rich Reddis and Muslims; and others who have had urban contacts or education in the city.

(2) *Intermediate Level*: all ordinary agriculturists; clean occupational castes and Muslim tradesmen constitute this group, which is by far the largest in the village.

(3) *Lower Level*: all the poorer sections of the population, such as the untouchable Malas and Madigas, and semi-tribal Vaddars and Erkalas, as well as poor Muslims, can be placed in this category.

With their urban contacts and education, as well as considerations of 'respectability' befitting their class, the people on the upper level set sufficiently high standards of behaviour. The stereotyped idealizations of the other two levels of population closely resemble the ideal-patterns of the upper level.

All three levels regard solidarity, co-operation and understanding as the essential attributes of the family that may be regarded as a model for the whole community. The ideal family should work on the principle of 'one for all, and all for one.' Different members of the family should function like an organized team, and have mutual trust and understanding. Toleration, goodwill and a sense of give-and-take among its members are necessary for the well-being and prosperity of the family. On the other hand, dissensions, conflicts and lack of understanding lead a family to its downfall.

There is unanimity in all three levels that the structure of the family is founded on its recognition of four basic principles. These are:

(1) Respect for age.
(2) Respect for position in the scale of kinship.
(3) Superiority of the male.
(4) Necessity of keeping certain family matters confined to the responsible members of the family, or at the most, within the family.

Further, in all three levels the importance of compromise as a

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tool for correct ordering of intra-family relations is emphasized. Mediation and reconciliation are regarded as the best methods of getting over family difficulties; timely partition of property and separation as the next best.

The people in the upper level not only believe in these ideals, but most of them consciously strive to achieve them in actual practice. A Brahmin will lose respect in the community if he gives up these noble ways and starts imitating the 'animal-like ways' of people on the lower levels. Prosperity of the Komti traders and money-lenders can be built up only when the whole family makes a concerted effort for it. A family of substantial agriculturists can further augment its land and improve its financial status by working hard as a team. This is equally applicable to both Hindu and Muslim agriculturists. People with urban contacts and education have also an urge to rise higher; and that necessitates solidarity, co-operation and understanding within the family. Great emphasis is laid here on correct behaviour towards different members of the family according to their age and kinship status. Disagreements must be expressed through permitted ways. Abuse and foul language should not be employed in referring to or addressing the elders. Any form of physical violence against them would be unthinkable and would cause great resentment in the other members of the family. Women on this level are generally kept confined to the home. Among the Muslims they observe strict *purdah*; among the Hindus for considerations of respectability it would be improper for them to go out to work. Thus they are largely confined to their houses. They have some ornamental value; nevertheless, in the entire social setting the comparative superiority of the male is latent. Family secrets on this level are always discussed in hushed tones, and all possible efforts are made to prevent them from leaking out. When husband and wife quarrel, the angry outburst must not be heard outside the home. If the husband beats the wife, her crying should not be loud enough to attract curious sympathizers into the house. The amours and intrigues of a member of the family, if they cannot be stopped, should at least be kept secret, and efforts should be made to prevent them from developing into open scandals. Mediation or arbitration by family elders is often effective for settling disputes within these families. If the misunderstandings and consequent difficulties seem to be beyond repair, property is gracefully

829 partitioned, and separation granted to the members who want to
565 secede from the family. This is sought to be done in an orderly
593 way, and every possible effort is made to ensure that the differences within the family do not become the subject of local gossip.

When we consider the actual behaviour of the people on the intermediate level, we find that many of these ideals are very considerably diluted. The value of solidarity is understood, but the willingness to make concessions and personal sacrifices for the sake of the family is not sufficiently strong to make it really effective. Age is generally respected, but in angry outbursts abuse
[201] may be showered on parents and uncles. Unable to control his temper one may even spit at them, or throw dust at them (symbolizing their burial, and thus indirectly wishing their death), or strike them. It would probably be necessary to express some sort of an apology for this unbecoming behaviour later, but the unrepentant individual can repeat it when he is provoked again. This type of behaviour is confined to a few individuals, and is socially criticized but none the less tolerated. Here too the superiority of the male is insisted upon, but the woman also works and is not tied down to many of the shackles of respectability. She does not lose face if she is beaten by her husband semi-publicly; occasionally she hits him back. She expresses her anger or suffering by running back to her parental home. In many cases some effort is made to conceal family secrets, but when passions rise, a father and son, or two brothers, but more often a mother-in-law and daughter-in-law, will openly quarrel in the courtyard or the village lanes, and in the course of the hearty exchange of abuse these secrets may be broadcast by them at the top of their voices. Family differences are discussed privately and occasionally in public as well, but even when property is divided and separation is completed, mutual bickerings and exchange of harsh words continue for several months in most cases.

829 On the lower level the 'ideals' get diluted so much that it is
593 difficult to find any traces of them in actual practice. Division of
562 property and separation at this level are so frequent as to reduce
829 the conception of family solidarity to practically a meaningless ideal. On ritual occasions, respect is shown to people on account of their age or kinship status, but in everyday life one can ignore these considerations with impunity. Although theoretically the woman is inferior, at this level she enjoys much more freedom. She

can work for wages and has considerable freedom of movement. Sexual lapses on her part are more liberally viewed. If the husband beats her, she too can beat him. If the abuses of her husband are loud, hers can be louder still. She can leave her husband and take another with comparative ease, and without any social stigma. This would permanently lower the status of persons on the upper level, and would be commented upon very adversely in the intermediate class. The family secrets are announced to the outside world by the members of the family itself in their open-air quarrels. Compromises are often made through mediation and arbitration, but may be disregarded with comparative ease after a few days.

It is probably needless to say that the above three levels are not fixed, nor are they exclusive. Modern education and other modern means of communication—especially the cinema—often infuse a spirit of romantic individualism into the youth of the upper level, who, rather than working for family solidarity, often disintegrate it. Education, urban contacts, 'disgust with rustic ways', and desire for greater respectability according to accepted social standards in some cases set in motion efforts at vertical movement in families on the lower levels.

2. INTER-PERSONAL RELATIONS WITHIN THE FAMILY

HUSBAND AND WIFE

According to the traditional norms of the society a husband is expected to be an authoritarian figure whose will should always dominate the domestic scene. As the head of the household he should demand respect and obedience from his wife and children. The wife should regard him as her 'master' and should 'serve him faithfully'. It is the husband's responsibility to provide adequately for the support and maintenance of 'his dependants' and the wife's duty is to 'run the household frugally and efficiently'. In an ideal home 'all major decisions are taken by the husband in consultation with his wife and grown-up children', but the final say in all matters connected with the family is always with the husband. The husband should 'watch the activities and ways of his wife' as well as 'take care of the proper upbringing of his children'. The wife should 'serve her husband with loyalty and devotion'. The husband is 'superior'; the wife is his 'subordinate'. As a mark of the recognition of his superiority, the wife shows respect to her

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of running away to her parental home. She often expresses her anger and discontent by neglecting the children and other household activities. If things still do not improve to her satisfaction, she begins to protest loudly, which often ends in open quarrels and altercations. On the other hand, among the men the stereotype that by nature woman is faithless is widely believed, and while they admit that there are some notable exceptions, they nevertheless emphasize the necessity of vigilance on the part of the husband and other responsible members of the family. The suspicion regarding a woman is directed particularly against two things: namely, possibility of a sexual liaison with a 'lover', and that of her stealthily giving money and grain to her relatives on the paternal side. If he suspects his wife, the husband makes suggestive hints and veiled threats. When subsequent events confirm his suspicion, he voices his protests loudly. Now he administers threats of dire consequences, and as a foretaste of what would come if she does not change her ways, he may even beat his wife. If things do not change for the better even with this, the subsequent developments may indeed be very complicated. However, much depends on the personality and disposition of the husband. Rather than allowing the affair to develop into an open scandal, some husbands overlook occasional lapses of their wives; others are so jealous that they cannot forget an incident of this type even when the wives mend their ways and keep on taunting them.

In a joint family, the daughter-in-law does not have any independence unless she becomes the mother of two or three children. Until then she should not be found even speaking to her husband. Efforts at endearment, smiling or even exchanging fond glances would be enough to cause comment and would earn for the couple a reputation for being 'shameless'. The husband in such families often hears the complaints from both his mother and his wife, and leaves them to adjust their relations among themselves.

In the preceding section I have discussed the ethics and ideals of family organization on the three levels of village population. The authoritarian husband and the docile wife is the ideal of people on all three levels, but it is only on the upper level that we find them holding to the ideal in actual practice. Even there, the desire to maintain 'family prestige' and 'good name' forces the husband to overlook some of the faults and failings of the wife and

593 565 837 [586] to maintain silence about them. But if affairs cross the limits of decency, or the constant misbehaviour of the wife threatens to become the subject of public gossip, the wife receives very harsh treatment and may even be driven out of the house. If she once leaves the house, readmittance for her would be practically impossible among the people of the upper level. On the other two levels, while tempers are roused very quickly and are even expressed publicly in a violent way, the reconciliation is not difficult. Faults of the wife are often openly discussed among them, and she is ridiculed in the presence of others; but she is quite readily forgiven also, and if she does not go astray again, she soon regains her former position in the household.

593 The stereotyped attitudes of wives for husbands and of husbands for wives are common for the community—as a whole. 'A woman should not be trusted. You can never tell when and how she would slip out', say the men in a knowing manner. Others add, 'Much depends on the husband. He must control his wife properly. Once he relaxes his control, then she is practically gone for all times.' The women, on the other hand, regard all men as heartless. 'It is impossible to please a husband; to-day he likes a thing very much; to-morrow he will lose his temper over it.' 'The lot of a woman is difficult. Unlucky ones receive beatings every day; the lucky ones get them only periodically. But is there a woman whose husband never beats her?' In a philosophical vein they add, 'And why not? The man works and earns. If we do not please him he beats us. Of what use are our protests? If a bullock runs away from one owner, will not its second master yoke it to a plough and mercilessly goad it to move faster? If we leave one man and go to another, what guarantee is there that he will not treat us in the same way?'

The wife does not dominate the domestic scene, but if she is tactful she can manipulate things in such a way that her husband will rarely go against her wishes. Gradually she comes to occupy a key position within the household.

581 Finally two significant questions may be raised: what type of wives do most men want? and what type of husbands do most women want? While the ideals and likes and dislikes of individuals are bound to differ greatly on the basis of their personal equations, certain attributes are considered desirable by people from nearly all the different levels of the community. A wife should be, above

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565 Considerations of general social status also determine the natur of work to be done by an individual. For example, a man of recognized social status will not draw water from a public well, where he could be seen doing so by others. Womenfolk from such households will not be seen collecting cow-dung from the streets, nor will they do any work in the fields.

With these preliminary observations we can proceed to describe at greater length the actual division of labour in the community.

462 The following table will illustrate the traditional division of work between men and women:

Activity	*Man's work*	*Woman's work*
(1) Domestic work (daily routine and maintenance of the house)	Occasional repairs to the house	Sweeping the house every day, and keeping its surroundings clean. Throwing away the rubbish. Sprinkling water in the courtyard and in front of the main entrance. Assisting husband in repairs to the house
	Cooking during the illness or menstrual impurity of the wife (when no other woman is available). Scrubbing the utensils during wife's serious illness	Fetching water from the well. Cooking. Serving food to menfolk and children. Scrubbing the utensils. Husking paddy. Grinding grains
	Occasionally washing his own clothes	Washing her own, as well as children's and husband's clothes
	Occasionally making beds	Making beds
	May look after children	Looking after children
	Chopping firewood and bringing it home	Collecting fuel in the nearby jungle
	Killing and cutting up goats and sheep	Preparation and storage of pickles, preserves and dried vegetables
	Marketing	Marketing, especially purchase of provisions
	Climbing trees for fruit	Collecting vegetables, picking gourds and okras from the backyard garden
	Erecting and repairing the cattle-shed	Feeding the cattle. Keeping the shed clean

LEVELS OF LIVING

883 [585] themselves to work. The major responsibility rests on the adults and the middle-aged people, and here the social status of the persons concerned will determine the type of work to be done by them.

461 566 This brings us to social status as a determinant in the division of work in the community. The rich and influential people will not do anything which is regarded as humble or is otherwise classed as menial work. The men on this level generally 'plan and supervise', but the hard manual labour is done by hired labourers. They go to their fields, but only stand in a corner and instruct the servants. They will never be seen taking their plough and the bullocks to the field, or even participating in ploughing or sowing. The popular conception regarding women at this level is 'they sit in their homes loaded with gold and silver, whiling away their time chewing betel leaves and areca nuts.' However, even in these homes, women are never idle, for they have to do the cooking and look after the children. But considerations of respectability prevent them from doing several things which their counterparts in the lower strata of society regard as their normal day-to-day work. They can never be seen going to their fields, carrying headloads, drawing water from public wells, or washing clothes in public places. In fact they do not have to do any work outside their homes and are not expected to earn for the upkeep of the [562] family. The rich Muslim women observe *purdah*, i.e. they never go out of their house without a veil, and considerations of respectability demand that their sphere of activity should strictly be confined to their houses. The situation is materially different in the case of the 'well-to-do' families, but no generalizations can be made regarding this level as a unit, as the social ideals and standards of different castes differ very widely. In general, however, it may be said that the Brahmin and the Komti, being higher castes and respected people in the village, more or less follow the ideals of the rich and refrain from doing heavy manual labour as well as from all other work traditionally regarded as inferior. This is true also of the Muslims on this level who, because of their urban conceptions of middle-class respectability, think it below their dignity to do any inferior work publicly. The women from the above three groups seek to emulate the examples of the women in rich families. But in the other well-to-do families belonging to the agricultural and occupational castes notions of respectability

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relating to work are different. Among them also, labourers are hired for heavy manual labour, such as carrying loads; but menfolk do not object to ploughing their own fields, nor avoid out-of-door work. Of course, the women mainly look after the management of their household affairs and are never expected to earn for the family's support.

The conditions on the two lower levels are more or less similar to one another. Unlike the two upper levels, the menfolk from these groups can be compelled to do government work on a nominal payment. They do most of their work with the assistance provided by the members of the family itself. Even when labourers are engaged by the 'average' people, members of the family continue to work side by side with hired men and women. On both these levels women have comparatively greater freedom. They work out of doors, assist the menfolk in their agricultural activities and crafts, and go out for marketing. Women from 'average' families work mostly in their own homes and in family fields, but during the busy agricultural season they can work for wages as well. This is not regarded as derogatory in any sense. In the poor families, on the other hand, women have to work very hard for, besides doing their quota of work in the running of the home and assisting the husband in agriculture and caste occupation, they have to accept occasional work for wages. Among some of the lower castes, women are expected to work and earn for the upkeep of the family.

4. DIET

The standard of living of a family is judged very often from the quality and quantity of its food. In describing the status and standard of a family, people generally say 'they eat well', 'they live somehow, eating the little that they can grow' or 'they live like animals, eating even wild leaves, flowers and roots'. However, the basic diet of the people consists of rice, millets, lentils, meat and fish. The difference in standards of living is judged by the quantity and kind of rice eaten, the frequency of meat intake in the diet and by the use of spices, fats and oils, jaggery and sugar in the food. Green and powdered red chillies are used by all classes of people in considerable quantities. Vegetables are grown in the backyards during the rainy season, and eaten when ready. When